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Inclusive development for persons with disabilities

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/165 of 19 December 2016, has two objectives: (a) to report on the implementation of Assembly resolutions 71/165 and 68/3; and (b) to submit to the Assembly recommendations for its consideration at its seventy-third session, with a view to further strengthening implementation of those resolutions.

The report includes a review of the current international frameworks and recent advances relating to inclusive development and the progress made in mainstreaming the rights, needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities at the national, regional and global levels. It discusses key issues and challenges faced in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, in particular in national economic and social development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian and emergency responses, inclusive and accessible urban and rural development. The report also provides an overview of the status of disability data and statistics in the context of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The report concludes with recommendations on policy options to further advance inclusive development and on the actions necessary to further mainstream disability in development, particularly in the context of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including through improved coordination of activities of the United Nations system to promote the advancement of persons with disabilities in development.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 71/165, entitled "Inclusive development for persons with disabilities", the General Assembly welcomed the inclusion of persons with disabilities in a series of post-2015 international development frameworks, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recognized that the participation of persons with disabilities was integral to the full and inclusive achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Assembly noted that, while considerable progress had been made in the mainstreaming of disability, further efforts were needed to strengthen the normative and operational links to integrate effectively the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities in development policies and programmes.

2. In that context, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in coordination with all relevant United Nations entities, to submit to it at its seventy-third session information on the implementation of the resolution and of the outcome document of the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities and to make appropriate recommendations to further strengthen implementation.

II. Disability inclusion in the current global development agendas

3. Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, the rights, needs and issues concerning persons with disabilities have garnered growing political commitments, especially in the post-2015 development agendas. The Convention, which emphasizes the importance of mainstreaming disability as an integral part of relevant strategies of sustainable development, has presented greater opportunities for advancing inclusive development for all. In reviewing of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and in the course of the process leading to the 2013 high-level meeting, Member States expressed their grave concern at the slow progress achieved in mainstreaming disability in global development agendas and reaffirmed the need to include and integrate the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities in development efforts at the national, regional and international levels.

4. The growing recognition not only of persons with disabilities as both beneficiaries and agents of change but also of their active participation in policy formulation and implementation have also contributed greatly to the renewed momentum behind further advancing inclusive development for all.

5. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda marked a milestone in terms of the commitment by the international community to further mainstream disability in development. With the pledge to "leave no one behind", the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals recognized disability as a cross-cutting issue and addressed it explicitly in five of the Goals, namely, those relating to education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, and data, monitoring and accountability. In addition, persons with disabilities have been recognized as a vulnerable group for whom progress must be particularly monitored, as Member States aim to achieve universal goals concerning basic needs, including eradicating poverty and hunger, ensuring healthy lives and well-being and securing access to clean water and sanitation.

6. Moreover, a series of post-2015 development frameworks have included the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities and called for the participation and contribution of persons with disabilities in the deliberation and development of relevant strategies.

7. In 2015, Member States included a disability perspective in the context of financing for development in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, in which States committed to providing access to quality education, including accessible and disability-sensitive educational facilities, employment, social protection and accessible technologies, as well as collecting and using data disaggregated by disability status for the monitoring and evaluation of the Agenda.

8. In the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, States emphasized the importance of disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction, and called for persons with disabilities to be included in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards in that regard and for the promotion of their contributions in the process. The first World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, Turkey, further increased the visibility of persons with disabilities in situations of humanitarian crises, with the adoption of the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

9. The New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III), held in Quito in October 2016, underlined the connection between urban development agendas and the 2030 Agenda, in particular its Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities. Member States adopted a twin-track approach to promoting inclusive urban development for all and pledged to eliminate discrimination, provide equal access to technology, employment and public services — including transport infrastructure — for persons with disabilities and ensure their participation in decision-making processes in urban planning.

10. In line with the commitments contained in the 2030 Agenda, certain regional strategies and frameworks have also been introduced for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development. In November 2017, the States in the Asia and Pacific region carried out a midpoint review of the implementation of their regional policy framework, the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific,[1] which prioritized 10 goals to guide Member States in implementing policy measures to advance disability-inclusive development in line with the 2030 Agenda. Agenda 2063 of the African Union, a strategic framework for the socioeconomic transformation of the continent, also included specific references to persons with disabilities in its targets related to social security, protection and health.

11. Moreover, a number of international processes and mechanisms — in particular the high-level political forum on sustainable development,[2] the Development Cooperation Forum,[3] annual sessions of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, such as the Commission for Social Development — as well

[1] Available at www.unescap.org/resources/incheon-strategy-%E2%80%9Cmake-right-real%E2%80%9D-persons-disabilities-asia-and-pacific.

[2] Established under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. For more information, see https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf.

[3] The Development Cooperation Forum was launched in 2007 as the result of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. As one of the principal new functions of the Economic and Social Council, the biennial, high-level Forum focuses on trends and progress in international development cooperation. It promotes knowledge-sharing and mutual learning. More details about the Forum, see www.un.org/ecosoc/en/development-cooperation-forum.

as regional frameworks and strategies, offered promising opportunities to support not only the operationalization of the 2030 Agenda and other global development agendas but also the monitoring and evaluation of international development progress regarding persons with disabilities.

III. Measures taken and progress made to advance inclusive development for persons with disabilities

12. In preparing the present report, Member States, United Nations entities and civil society organizations were requested to provide information with respect to General Assembly resolution 71/165, in particular: (a) the progress made towards implementing the resolution and the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly;[4] (b) the policies, measures and programmes adopted to mainstream the rights, needs and participation of persons with disabilities; (c) the steps taken to expedite the mainstreaming of data on disability into official national statistics; and (d) the recommendations made for specific policy action to be taken to address key issues and challenges encountered in furthering disability inclusion in development agenda and efforts.

13. Submissions were received from 29 Member States,[5] 10 entities of the United Nations system[6] and 9 civil society organizations.[7] The sections below present an overview, based on the submissions received from major stakeholders, on the progress made and the remaining challenges in furthering inclusive development for persons with disabilities, in particular in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

A. Member States

National strategies and plans of actions

14. National strategies and plans of actions continued to be one of the cornerstones for mainstreaming disability and promoting the rights, needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities. Argentina, Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Ecuador, Germany, Malta, Slovenia, the Sudan, Turkey and Panama highlighted the progress they had made in aligning national disability policy frameworks and legislation with the Convention in order to integrate the principles of accessibility and inclusion into their national strategies. Colombia, for example, had continued to harmonize its legislation with the Convention, within the regional framework,[8]

[4] General Assembly resolution 68/3.

[5] Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Georgia, Germany, Indonesia, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Qatar, Senegal, Slovenia, the Sudan, Togo, Turkey and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

[6] The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Disability Partnership), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the World Tourism Organization, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

[7] CBM, Center for the Human Rights of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, European Disability Forum, International Disability Alliance, International Disability and Development Consortium, Light for the World International, Sightsavers, World Blind Union, and Zero Project.

[8] Organization of American States, Inter-American Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities.

including a road map for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in different subsequent regulations.

15. To further their efforts in promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities, a number of Member States, including Argentina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lithuania, Malta, the Philippines and Qatar, had established national coordination mechanisms to engage different government branches, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations and other major stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of their national disability frameworks. Malta, for example, reported on the restructuring of the national focal point for disability matters to ensure that all government boards included persons with disabilities, and that the disability perspective was incorporated in all specific and cross-cutting policies for inclusive development.

16. Furthermore, Argentina, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Indonesia, Lithuania, Malta, Peru, Panama and Togo also reported on their efforts to mainstream disability in their respective national development strategies in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Ecuador, for example, had formulated a national public policy in the field of disability aligned to the relevant Sustainable Development Goals[9] that consisted of 12 policy directives and their respective strategies and indicators. In Indonesia, the promotion of disability-inclusive development in the National Medium-Term Development Plan 2015–2019 had been translated into guidelines on disability-responsive budgeting and planning to mainstream disability in the work of various government branches and agencies at the national and local levels. The Philippines had adopted the General Appropriation Act to incorporate budget allocation for persons with disabilities in programmes and services of the national Government.

17. In the pursuit of inclusive and sustainable development for all, Member States reaffirmed their commitments to social integration and economic policies that eliminated discrimination, reduced inequalities and promoted access to basic social and health-care services, education for all and employment for persons with disabilities.

Social protection floors, social services and sustainable livelihood

18. Eliminating discrimination, ensuring equal access to universal social protection floors and safety nets and enhancing responsive support and services to persons with disabilities were critical to promoting inclusive development for all. Policies and programmes to guarantee social protection and improve the access to and coverages of social services for persons with disabilities were reported by a number of Member States.

19. Senegal had launched an "equal opportunities card" programme to provide a system of social protection for persons with disabilities, including health-care services, functional rehabilitation, education, vocational training, employment and public transport. Colombia had adopted a decision-making protocol to improve the social protection and services provided to persons with intellectual, psychosocial and multiple disabilities, aimed at eliminating barriers in administrative procedures.

20. Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico reported on the development of national social protection frameworks that were inclusive of persons with disabilities. Peru had also developed and adopted guidelines for mainstreaming the disability approach in its social programmes, for the integration of disability perspectives at all levels of the management of social programmes.

[9] Goals 3–5, 8–11 and 16.

21. Canada had implemented the Registered Disability Saving Plan to help persons with disabilities and their families to save for long-term financial security, including through the provision of government grants and bonds. Ecuador and Panama reported on their national programmes to provide financial assistance to persons with disabilities in poverty and caregivers of persons with severe disabilities. Azerbaijan reported on its progress in improving the quality of medical, social and rehabilitation services through more efficient and extended use of information and communications technology. China and Croatia reported on the progress made in enhancing their systems for the early diagnosis for disabilities, as well as rehabilitation services.

Education and employment

22. Inclusive education and the empowerment of persons with disabilities can reduce inequalities and expedite inclusive and sustainable economic development. Member States reported on their continued legislative progress and policy development for the promotion of inclusive education for persons with disabilities, in particular at the preschool, basic and middle levels. Ecuador, for example, had introduced several inclusion programmes that provided broader access for persons with disabilities to education, including "National Model of Educational Management and Care for Students with Special Educational Needs" and "National Bilingual Bicultural Model for People with Hearing Impairment". Several Member States had also emphasized tertiary education and vocational training in empowering persons with disabilities. The Philippines, through the "Act on promoting universal access to quality tertiary education", had established a set of financial assistance programmes for persons with disabilities.

23. More comprehensive and systematic employment policies and programmes had been introduced in Member States for the inclusive economic development and empowerment of persons with disabilities. Cambodia, Canada, China and Croatia reported on different government initiatives aimed at improving the preparedness of persons with disabilities to join the labour market, including the establishment of vocational training centres, plans to make information more available and education programmes that encouraged self-employment. Panama had launched a programme aimed at promoting and guiding persons with disabilities and their families in creating small family businesses and microenterprises.

24. Furthermore, both traditional and innovative policy tools had been deployed in the labour market to promote the employment of persons with disabilities. Affirmative action, such as quota schemes applied in public and private sectors, had been an important measure in many Member States to raise awareness among employers and stimulate gradual growth in the employment rates of persons with disabilities. To enhance the effective implementation of the quota system, several Member States had developed coordination mechanisms between government bodies, the private sector and civil society. In Ecuador, a strategic alliance had been established between the Ministry of Labour, the National Council on Disability and the Federations of Persons with Disabilities, to guide and advise employers in a coordinated manner on the duties and labour rights of persons with disabilities and to monitor compliance with the quota system for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Canada had developed labour market agreements for persons with disabilities, to transfer funds annually to the provinces and territories to establish programmes and services designed to improve the employment situation for persons with disabilities. Meanwhile, innovative solutions, such as public-private partnerships and social entrepreneurship, had also created job opportunities and had improved working environments for persons with disabilities in Croatia, Slovenia and Turkey.

Disaster risk reduction and humanitarian actions

25. Efforts to mainstream the rights, needs, perspectives and participation of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction efforts were reported by a number of Member States. Since the adoption of the Sendai Framework, Argentina, Cambodia, Indonesia and Togo had established or strengthened their national risk reduction frameworks. Bahrain, Canada, Croatia, Ecuador, Malta, Mexico, Panama, Peru and the Philippines reported on the development of national action plans and guidelines for disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction.

26. Recognizing the significance of the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, several Member States had worked closely with civil society organizations to further strengthen and mainstream inclusion and awareness of persons with disabilities in humanitarian actions, to address the multi-sectional factors that often left certain populations more vulnerable to disasters and other emergency situations. Germany reported on the development of a gender-age-disability marker for inclusive humanitarian action for all persons with disabilities. The Philippines noted the importance of disaggregated data collection, monitoring and reporting in the aftermath of disasters, in order to better understand and respond to the needs of affected populations, including persons with disabilities, and to support pathways towards recovery and development for all.

27. At the operational level, several Member States reported on efforts to promote the accessibility and participation of persons with disabilities in the development and implementation of disaster preparedness, emergency response and recovery programmes. Ecuador had incorporated the accessibility of persons with disabilities in the training programmes it gave to government officials. It had also designed inclusive early warning systems for persons with disabilities and had developed rescue workshops for persons with disabilities.

Inclusive and accessible urban and rural development

28. It was reported that urbanization, one of the most significant trends of the twenty-first century, could be used as a powerful force to influence development across the world. With proper urban and rural development planning and management, it could accelerate progress in addressing global challenges, including poverty, inequality and access to basic services and facilities, and advancing inclusive development for persons with disabilities. A number of Member States reported on their national accessibility policies for urban planning and accessible community and housing development, public transport, public information and communication and other facilities and services. Croatia, for example, had made housing, mobility and accessibility one of the key areas of its national strategy. It aimed to build an accessible environment with the principles of universal design and to create added value for all members of society. Lithuania had launched a public governance improvement programme for the period 2012–2020, including a goal to improve the quality of service for individuals and to enhance the accessibility of services provided to society, including persons with disabilities. By 2017, 30 per cent of all public services in Lithuania had been provided electronically.

29. Member States also reported on their housing policies for persons with disabilities and their families as a means of advancing inclusive urban development. Bahrain had paid special attention to the needs of persons with disabilities for housing, with the provision of special services that provided communication and financial assistance to persons with disabilities and their families for the acquisition and use of adequate housing. In Colombia, the Government's free housing programme had granted priority to persons with disabilities and their families in the multi-family housing project.

30. Moreover, it was found that the experience and perspectives of persons with disabilities could contribute greatly to accessible and inclusive development in urban and rural areas, which benefited the general population in society. Ecuador, for instance, had included in its national policies a project to provide earthquake-resistant and accessible housing to persons with disabilities.

31. In terms of promoting accessibility in the planning, design and construction of the physical environment, public spaces and public transport, several Member States reported on their initiatives to pilot accessible projects and to encourage broader engagement and knowledge-sharing. To improve road safety for persons with disabilities, the Bahrain Road Affairs Authority had worked with different parties to launch a pilot project to install traffic signs with a voice feature for persons with visual and hearing impairments and to improve the accessibility for persons with disabilities of sidewalks and carparks in selected urban areas. Indonesia, for example, had introduced the "Inclusive City Award" to encourage competition among local leaders to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities. In Turkey, accessibility support projects had been implemented since 2012 to offer financial and technical support from different government branches, to expand accessibility and give greater financial support to the different cities involved in the programme.

32. The positive impacts of promoting accessible tourism were reported to have contributed to the promotion by Member States of accessible and inclusive urban and rural development. Colombia, for example, had launched the accessible tourism programme in 2017, to improve the accessibility of environments, products and services under the principle of universal design, through awareness-raising, training and inter-agency cooperation. Malta had pursued an accessible tourism policy that regulated accessibility in public spaces, such as hotels and beaches, and allocated specific funding in the national budget to improve accessibility.

33. Bahrain, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Indonesia, Malta, Slovenia and Turkey reported on the legislation behind and updates to their national accessibility standards, in particular for the built environment, based on the principles of universal design. Canada had updated its National Building Code, including technical provisions for the design and construction of new buildings, and had established requirements to address objectives concerning safety, health and accessibility for persons with disabilities. Slovenia had published a manual on the construction of universal buildings to help the public better understand the issues and to improve the implementation of the related laws and regulations. The European Parliament had issued a directive on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications for all users of public services, especially persons with disabilities.

Reaching the furthest behind: achieving inclusive development for all persons with disabilities

34. Strengthening the inclusion of persons with disabilities and reaching the furthest behind is a prerequisite for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for all. Persons with disabilities, in particular those who are women, children, young people, indigenous peoples, older persons, migrants or refugees, continue to be subjected to multiple, aggravated and intersecting forms of discrimination and more prone to be left behind in social and economic development. Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Costa Rica reported on the close working relationships among their national disability agencies and other government entities devoted to the matters related to women, children and indigenous peoples.

35. Several Member States reported on national legislative measures that had an emphasis on vulnerable groups. The Sudan, for example, had adopted legislation that specifically addressed gender-based violence and human trafficking and inclusive

social and economic development for women and girls. Mexico had included in its General Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents a section on children and adolescents with disabilities that stipulated non-discrimination as a principle for the design and implementation of public policies and promoted social inclusion through universal design and awareness-raising. China had implemented targeted social support and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities and had provided subsidies for basic assistive devices for children with disabilities.

36. Multisectoral factors often left certain groups more vulnerable to disaster and humanitarian crises. Member States reported taking that into consideration in their approaches to disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response. Germany had developed a gender-age-disability marker for inclusive humanitarian action for all persons with disabilities. The Government of Nepal had collaborated with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to develop guidelines for identifying and prioritizing vulnerable and marginalized populations for humanitarian response, recovery, preparedness and disaster risk reduction, including women and girls and persons with disabilities.

International cooperation

37. Member States continued to promote and strengthen international cooperation, incorporating the needs and well-being of persons with disabilities, in particular in developing countries. Canada, for example, had invested over 80 million dollars in international projects geared towards disability issues and the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, including efforts to strengthen inclusive health, education and employment systems and to provide emergency physical and rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities.

38. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Cambodia and Croatia reported on their commitments to advancing disability-inclusive development through the exchange of good practices and information- and knowledge-sharing, with a focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and most marginalized social groups.

Data and statistics

39. Member States reported on the measures taken to expedite the mainstreaming of data on disability into official statistics, in order to better evaluate the situation of persons with disabilities and support the development of evidence-based policies and programmes inclusive of persons with disabilities. Canada, for example, had launched a new disability data strategy that consisted of a survey on disability and a disability module in the census. Lithuania had introduced amendments to the Law on the Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities, to establish a procedure and the statistical indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Convention and the social integration of persons with disabilities.

40. Argentina, Bulgaria, Croatia and Malta reported on their progress regarding the collection, processing and dissemination of statistical information for persons with disabilities, especially in the field of social and economic development, such as employment. Bahrain reported on the open data policy that the Government had recently adopted, through which different government branches and the public had access to information and statistics on persons with disabilities. Mexico and Peru reported on the coordination efforts of several relevant ministries and departments tasked with the collection, integration and production of disability-related data and statistics. In Qatar, a team consisting of five ministries and the University of Qatar had been formed to integrate the available databases into a unified national database for persons with disabilities.

41. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reported that its Disability Registration and Certification System and Homeland Registry had supported the collection of data and statistics concerning persons with disabilities and their living conditions. China had adopted the Disability Registration and Certification System to better monitor the situation of persons with disabilities and provide targeted social service packages, including social protection, basic health-care and rehabilitation services, housing, education and employment opportunities.

42. Nevertheless, several Member States noted the challenges that remained concerning the deficiency of reliable, high-quality statistics and internationally comparable data and information on the situation of persons with disabilities, owing to the varying concepts and definitions of disability between national and international contexts, the lack of specific data disaggregated by disability for the monitoring and implementation of national strategies, the financial constraints national agencies faced and the challenges for collecting data in remote and outermost areas.

B. United Nations system

43. The United Nations system continued to foster cooperation and further improve coordination among existing international processes and mechanisms to advance disability-inclusive global agendas.

44. In April 2018, the Secretary-General had decided to conduct an institutional review of the Organization's current approach to mainstreaming disabilities across its operations. The outcome of the review would inform the preparation of an internal policy and action plan to strengthen the ability to mainstream disabilities, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

45. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which was the focal point on disability of the United Nations system, had led the mainstreaming of disability in the 2030 Agenda. It had conducted a number of activities, including strengthening evidence-based research and the operational frameworks, provided technical support to Member States through the development of practical tools[10] and also provided capacity-building workshops,[11] and promoted multi-stakeholder dialogue through consultations, forums and expert group meetings. Currently, the Department was leading the preparation and production of the upcoming flagship report on disability and development, which would provide a compilation and analyses of the current situation of persons with disabilities and national policies and programmes for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities. Those ongoing efforts continued to lead international discourse on evidence-based policymaking for inclusive development for persons with disabilities.

46. In the area of disability data and statistics, the United Nations Statistical Commission, at its forty-ninth session, had called for the compilation and analysis of information on national practices in collecting data and estimates on disability, with a view to understanding the causes of the observed differences. It had also endorsed the creation of a group of experts to review data-collection instruments and provide

[10] For example, the Toolkit on Disability for Africa of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, available at www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/disability/Toolkit/CRPD-Trainers-tips.pdf.

[11] In the past two years, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had conducted workshops in several countries in Africa and Latin America with the participation of government officials, experts and representatives from organizations of persons with disabilities from more than 30 countries.

guidance for the disaggregation of data by disability status, among other things.[12] Currently, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs was updating the Guidelines and Principles for the Development of Disability Statistics through the above-mentioned group of experts, to ensure an effective data programme that responded to the policy needs for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development for all, including persons with disabilities. Relevant stakeholders in the field had been engaged to work together for a harmonized and coordinated approach for capacity-building that took into account the short- and long-term statistical development needs of countries on the status of persons with disabilities and on inclusive development.

47. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the support of the European Union, had launched a project entitled "Bridging the Gap", the first part of which focused on human rights indicators of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in support of a disability-inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and aimed to develop tools to facilitate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, guided by the Convention.

48. The regional commissions continued their efforts to engage Member States, persons with disabilities and other major stakeholders in advancing the full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the internationally agreed development goals. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific had supported the implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the region of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the Incheon Strategy. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia had supported the establishment of an intergovernmental network of experts on disability policy, the Inter-sessional Group of Experts on Disability, at the regional level, which had strengthened South-South and triangular cooperation, exchanged information on disability and discussed disability-related goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda.

49. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean had organized with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs an expert group meeting entitled "Regional meeting on disability measurement and disability statistics in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the World Programme on Population and Housing Census in 2020", to exchange national experiences on the approaches adopted to measure the population with disabilities.

50. Other United Nations funds and programmes had also worked in their specific areas to ensure that development policies and programmes in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda included persons with disabilities and their situations and perspectives. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East had continued its work for Palestine refugees with disabilities, including the implementation of full Education in Emergencies approach and the adoption of disability-inclusive criteria for service provision. The International Labour Organization had focused its work on the promotion of disability-inclusive development for social protection, vocational training and employment. The World Health Organization (WHO) had continued its work for persons with disabilities in accordance with its global disability action plan for the period 2014–2021,[13] including by providing technical support to Member States in removing barriers to health services for persons with disabilities. WHO also continued to promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities through community-based inclusive

[12] Statistical Commission decision 49/116 on disability statistics. See report of the Commission at its forty-ninth session (E/2018/24-E/CN 3/2018/37).

[13] Available at www.who.int/disabilities/actionplan/en/.

development as well as the WHO QualityRights initiative and toolkit.[14] The World Tourism Organization had continued its effort in promoting accessible tourism for all through close collaboration with civil society to create an international standard to offer clear guidelines for tourism planning and destination management for accessible urban development as well as inclusive development for all.

51. In 2017, UN-Women had supported initiatives for the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities in nearly 30 Member States, including by partnering with women organizations to support legal and psychosocial services to enhance the capacity of women and girls with disabilities to advocate for gender equality in the humanitarian context. The implementation plan of UN-Women for the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity addressed the inclusion of women with disabilities. UN-Women was also finalizing a strategy for the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities and for disability inclusion in all areas of its work.

52. The United Nations system had strengthened its collaboration and coordination to achieve coherence and synergies in the area of disability. The members of the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had worked in a coordinated manner by reviewing collectively the policies and practices concerning disability inclusion and the implementation of the Convention.[15] The Group had presented joint statements, especially to the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at its tenth session. The Group had also established sub-working groups to focus on certain pertinent issues, such as humanitarian actions, community-based development initiatives, women and girls with disabilities and a potential system-wide action plan on disability. The United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Disability Partnership)[16] had already committed financial support to 38 United Nations country teams for the implementation of joint United Nations programmes to advance the implementation of the Convention.

53. In the face of changing global development landscapes, there remained challenges and gaps to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for all and to implement the 2030 Agenda with no one left behind. Further actions must be taken by the United Nations system to better support the endeavour of Member States in promoting the inclusion and the rights of persons with disabilities in all spheres of development and society and to make the United Nations itself fully inclusive of persons with disabilities.

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[14] The WHO QualityRights initiative and toolkit aims to improve the quality and human rights condition in inpatient and outpatient mental health and social care facilities and empower organizations to advocate for the rights of persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities. For more information, see www.who.int/mental_health/policy/quality_rights/en/.

[15] The Inter-Agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was established in 2006 by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, in a decision at its twelfth session (see CEB/2006/7, para. 58). The Secretariat of the Group is led jointly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and OHCHR, and the Group engages widely with the Secretariat of the United Nations, as well as its funds and programmes, entities, other bodies and specialized agencies.

[16] The Disability Partnership is a unique collaborative effort that brings together United Nations entities, Governments, disabled people's organizations and civil society to advance the rights of persons with disabilities around the world. Building on the networks and expertise of its diverse members, the Partnership facilitates joint programming at the country, regional and global levels, with a focus on policy dialogue, coalition-building and strategic capacity-development to advance disability-inclusive development. The United Nations entities that participate in the Partnership are ILO, OHCHR, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN-Women and WHO.

C. Civil society organizations

54. Significant progress had been made by civil society organizations in facilitating and supporting the effective and active participation of persons with disabilities and their representatives in decision-making processes, in particular for inclusive development, at the international, regional, national and local levels. Through awareness-raising, training programmes and knowledge-exchange and research initiatives, a number of civil society organizations had reported on the progress made by, for and with persons with disabilities for inclusive development. The European Disability Forum had produced a report on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals to share a European perspective on inclusive and sustainable development for persons with disabilities. The Zero Project, for example, had launched an initiative to provide a platform for the exchange of innovative policies and practices to promote accessibility in all aspects of urban development, engaging Governments, other civil society organizations and the private sector.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations: ways forward to further inclusive development for persons with disabilities

55. In pursuit of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, disability issues must be further mainstreamed as an integral part of policies and programmes for inclusive development. In recent years, Governments and other stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the private sector, have achieved significant progress in mainstreaming disability in the implementation of their national development efforts. A growing number of national strategies and action plans have adopted integrated approaches and strengthened institutional structures and mechanisms for better coordination and implementation. The world over, more and more success stories are appearing on incorporating the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities in the implementation of development policies and programmes. Disability has started to gain momentum as a priority issue in international cooperation for inclusive development, in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

56. The General Assembly has reiterated that there are persistent gaps between political commitments and development practice on the ground. It is imperative that the common goals, objectives and principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda be translated into concrete action that incorporate the rights, well-being and perspective of persons with disabilities in development policies, programmes and activities.

57. Moving forward, it is critical that Member States and other stakeholders address the challenges and concerns of those left furthest behind in society and in development, and ensure that persons with disabilities are given equal opportunities and access to participate in all spheres of society and development. To that end, the United Nations is stepping up its efforts to mainstream disability in all aspects of its operations and to provide normative, analytical and technical assistance to Member States in their endeavours to implement the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities.

58. The General Assembly may wish to consider the following specific actions to promote further inclusive development by, for and with persons with disabilities, in particular in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda, in line with the Convention:

(a) Urge Member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders to further strengthen the normative framework on disability in line with the principle of the 2030 Agenda to "leave no one behind", addressing disability as a global issue and cutting across the three pillars of the United Nations, namely, peace and security, human rights and development;

(b) Urge Member States and other stakeholders to harmonize laws, policies and programmes for the equal and full participation of persons with disabilities in society and development, in line with the Convention, and to develop a holistic framework for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals, by, for and with persons with disabilities, through strengthened coordination and follow-up and review mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels;

(c) Encourage Member States, the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders to strengthen ongoing efforts towards disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action through new and existing partnerships and networks in the disaster risk reduction and the humanitarian domains, as appropriate, to build resilience, better mitigate risks and support pathways towards recovery and development, including during protracted crises;

(d) Encourage Member States, international development institutions and other stakeholders, including the private sector, to ensure that accessibility is promoted as a means of achieving as well as the ultimate goal of inclusive society and development, and to apply the principles of universal design in urban and rural development, including the planning, design and construction of physical and virtual environments, public spaces, transportation and public services;

(e) Call upon Member States, in the context of monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and given the need to collect data disaggregated by disability status: (i) to choose appropriate measurement tools; (ii) to examine the underlying concepts, purposes and advantages of existing relevant data-collection tools and instruments; and (iii) to ensure that all relevant stakeholders work with the United Nations to address the existing data gaps, including the urgently needed baseline data for monitoring progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities, and to strengthen national capacities in that regard;

(f) Take note of the steps taken by the Secretary-General to strengthen coordination, coherence and accountability for the inclusion of the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities in United Nations operations, and request that he provide an update to it on those measures in due course.